

THE INFLUENCE OF THAI TV DRAMA VIEWING BEHAVIOR
ON CHINESE YOUNG AUDIENCE'S INTENTION TO TRAVEL
TO THAILAND*

อิทธิพลของพฤติกรรมการรับชมละครไทยผ่านสื่อใหม่
ต่อความตั้งใจเดินทางสู่ประเทศไทยของเยาวชนจีน

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Abstract

This research article aims to study the influence of Thai TV drama viewing behavior on the intention of young Chinese audiences to travel to Thailand in the context of new media, with objectives to examine the direct impact of Thai drama viewing behavior, analyze how destination cognitive image serves, investigate the affective image of Thailand and to explore the formation of overall image, according to concept of cross-cultural influence, destination imagine, new media's role in travel decision-making and travel intention and media-induced tourism. Through a mixed-methods approach combining mixed research by research tools as questionnaire and dept-interview.

The results that exposure to Thai dramas through new media channels has a significant impact on the travel intentions and behavior of young audiences in China, this could contribute to our understanding of the effects of media on behavior and decision-making, and support theories related to media effects.

Keywords: Viewing Behavior; Chinese Young audience; Tourism Intention; New Media

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาอิทธิพลของพฤติกรรมการรับชมละครโทรทัศน์ไทยที่มีต่อความตั้งใจของผู้ชมหนุ่มสาวชาวจีนที่จะเดินทางมาประเทศไทยในบริบทของสื่อใหม่ โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อตรวจสอบผลกระทบโดยตรงของพฤติกรรมการรับชมละครไทย โดยวิเคราะห์ว่าภาพทางปัญญาของจุดหมายปลายทางมีบทบาทอย่างไร และสำรวจการก่อตัวของภาพลักษณ์โดยรวม ตามแนวคิดอิทธิพลข้ามวัฒนธรรม จินตนาการจุดหมายปลายทาง บทบาทของสื่อใหม่ในการตัดสินใจด้านการเดินทางและความตั้งใจในการเดินทาง และการท่องเที่ยวที่เกิดจากสื่อ ด้วยวิธีการวิจัยเชิงผสมผสานด้วยการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลด้วยแบบสอบถามในการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณและแบบสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกในการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า การเปิดรับละครไทยผ่านช่องทางสื่อใหม่มีผลกระทบอย่างมากต่อความตั้งใจและพฤติกรรมการเดินทางของผู้ชมรุ่นเยาว์ในประเทศจีน ทำให้เราเข้าใจถึงผลกระทบของสื่อต่อพฤติกรรมและการตัดสินใจ และสนับสนุนทฤษฎีที่เกี่ยวข้องกับผลกระทบของสื่อได้

คำสำคัญ: พฤติกรรมการรับชม; ผู้ชมหนุ่มสาวจีน; ความตั้งใจในการท่องเที่ยว; สื่อใหม่

Introduction

One of the main reasons for the popularity of Thai dramas in China is the unique style and themes they offer. Chinese viewers can easily access Thai dramas through online streaming platforms like IQiYi and Tencent Video, which offer a vast selection of Thai dramas with Chinese subtitles. Chinese audiences can now watch Thai dramas online, which has helped to increase their popularity (Siriyuvasak, 2010).

With the rise of new media and the widespread availability of Thai dramas through online streaming platforms, there is a possibility that Thai dramas could influence Young Chinese Audience' attitudes towards travel to Thailand.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the direct impact of Thai drama viewing behavior.
2. To analyze how destination cognitive image serves.

3. To investigate the affective image of Thailand.
4. To explore the formation of overall image.

Methodology

1. Research Design

The research design serves as a roadmap that not only outlines what will be done but also explains the rationale behind each step. It connects theoretical insights with practical implementation to ensure that the study achieves its academic objectives while contributing meaningfully to the body of knowledge on media-induced tourism and youth travel behavior. (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)

2. Population and Sample size

The population of young adults aged 18–35 in Shanxi province. The determination of the sample size is based on the finite population sample size calculation formula proposed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970)

$$S = \frac{X^2 \cdot N \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}{d^2 \cdot (N - 1) + X^2 \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}$$

Thus, the minimum required sample size is approximately 384 questionnaires. By sampling collection with snowball approach to collect data in this research with questionnaire for quantitative approach and dept-interview for qualitative approach by 20 experts to support this method.

3. Research Instrument

This study adopts a mixed methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Gretzel et al., 2006). As a result, quantitative method is designed in case with questionnaires which aims to operationalize abstract research variables into measurable items, When Dept-interview is design for serve to qualitative method also.

4. Data Collection

Enabling the collection of authentic respondent feedback through surveys, while data collection constitutes the practical implementation to acquire empirical foundations. A high-quality questionnaire enhances data

validity and research credibility, and robust sampling strategies and data collection methods ensure sample representativeness and analytical rigor.

5. Data Analysis Statistics Used to Analyzed The Data

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Analysis of Basic Demographic Information in the Questionnaire

Table 1 Number and composition ratio of each category of basic information of respondents

Frequency Analysis Results				
Item	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
1. What is your age?	18-24 years old	164	42.49	42.49
	25-30 years old	159	41.19	83.68
	31-35 years old	63	16.32	100.00
2. What is your gender?	Male	25	6.48	6.48
	Female	361	93.52	100.00
3. What is your highest level of education?	High school or below	91	23.58	23.58
	Junior college	103	26.68	50.26
	Bachelor's degree	147	38.08	88.34
	Master's degree or above	45	11.66	100.00
4. Have you ever watched Thai dramas?	Yes	386	100.00	100.00
5. When was your most recent trip to Thailand?	Never been to Thailand	192	49.74	49.74
	Within 1 year	89	23.06	72.80
	Within 1-2 years	43	11.14	83.94
	More than 2 years ago	62	16.06	100.00
6. What is your primary device for watching Thai dramas?	Television	111	28.76	28.76
	Computer	131	33.94	62.69
	Mobile phone or tablet	144	37.31	100.00

Table 1 Number and composition ratio of each category of basic information of respondents (Next)

Frequency Analysis Results				
Item	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
7. What is your primary method of watching Thai dramas?	Live TV channels	124	32.12	32.12
	Set-top box on-demand/replay function	117	30.31	62.44
	Video websites or their apps	82	21.24	83.68
	Others	63	16.32	100.00
Total		386	100.0	100.0

In this study, the age of the sample was predominantly concentrated between 18 and 35 years old. Among these, young viewers aged 18-24 represented the highest proportion at 42.49% (164 participants), followed by those aged 25–30 at 41.19% (159 participants), while viewers aged 31-35 constituted a smaller share of 16.32% (63 participants).

Univariate analysis

The sample size and the sample standard deviation, and then determine whether the means of the two samples are significantly different.

Table 2 Univariate variance of age on each dimension

ANOVA Results					
1. What is your age? (Mean ± Standard Deviation)					
	18-24 years old (n=164)	25-30 years old (n=159)	31-35 years old (n=63)	F	p
Thai Drama Viewing Behavior Dimension	4.41±0.96	4.43±0.97	4.47±0.80	0.078	0.925
Cognitive Image of the Destination	4.25±0.96	4.32±0.97	4.31±0.83	0.192	0.826
Affective Image of the Destination	4.26±0.95	4.32±0.95	4.31±0.82	0.181	0.835
Overall Destination Image	4.17±0.92	4.21±0.93	4.22±0.79	0.075	0.928
Travel Intention Dimension	3.97±0.87	4.00±0.91	4.01±0.76	0.079	0.924

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

In the dimension of Thai television drama viewing behavior, the average scores across the three age groups were relatively close and all at a high level, indicating that younger audiences of all age groups exhibited similarly active engagement with Thai television dramas.

Table 3 Independent sample t-test of gender on each dimension

t-Test Analysis Results							
2. What is your gender? (Mean ± Standard Deviation)							
				Male (n=25)	Female (n=361)	t	p
Thai Drama Viewing Behavior Dimension				4.34±0.76	4.44±0.95	-0.475	0.635
Cognitive Destination Image Dimension				4.07±0.72	4.30±0.95	-1.188	0.235
Affective Destination Image Dimension				4.16±0.72	4.31±0.94	-0.756	0.450
Overall Destination Image Dimension				4.11±0.72	4.20±0.91	-0.474	0.635
Travel Intention Dimension				3.95±0.71	3.99±0.88	-0.228	0.820

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Results from the t-test indicated that gender did not have a statistically significant effect on viewing behavior. For the destination cognitive image dimension, the female group also demonstrated marginally higher mean scores compared to the male group.

Table 4 Single factor variance values of education level on each dimension

ANOVA Results									
3. What is your educational level? (Mean ± Standard Deviation)									
				High School and below (n=91)	College (n=103)	Bachelor's (n=147)	Master's and above (n=45)	F	p
Thai Drama Viewing Behavior Dimension				4.34±1.07	4.36±1.05	4.58±0.72	4.30±1.01	1.966	0.119
Destination Cognitive Image Dimension				4.16±1.06	4.23±1.04	4.44±0.74	4.18±1.00	2.110	0.099
Destination Emotional Image Dimension				4.18±1.04	4.25±1.03	4.43±0.73	4.20±0.99	1.757	0.155
Overall Image Dimension				4.09±1.03	4.14±1.00	4.33±0.69	4.12±0.98	1.745	0.157
Travel Intention Dimension				3.89±0.99	3.93±0.95	4.12±0.67	3.90±0.97	1.803	0.146

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

For the destination cognitive image dimension, ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant impact of education level, suggesting that audiences with varying educational backgrounds held largely consistent perceptions of Thailand as a travel destination.

Table 5 Single factor variance values of Recent travel time to Thailand on each dimension

ANOVA Results						
5. When was the last time you traveled to Thailand? (Mean ± Standard Deviation)						
	Never been to Thailand (n=192)	Within 1 year (n=89)	Within 1–2 years (n=43)	More than 2 years ago (n=62)	F	p
Thai Drama Viewing Behavior	4.45±0.99	4.59±0.59	4.13±1.16	4.36±0.98	2.511	0.058
Destination Cognitive Image	4.33±0.99	4.44±0.62	3.91±1.10	4.21±1.00	3.402	0.018*
Destination Affective Image	4.33±0.97	4.44±0.60	3.93±1.09	4.24±0.99	3.091	0.027*
Overall Destination Image	4.22±0.94	4.35±0.58	3.84±1.07	4.13±0.97	3.335	0.020*
Travel Intention	4.00±0.91	4.14±0.55	3.69±1.07	3.92±0.93	2.840	0.038*

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

The ANOVA results revealed that the most recent travel time to Thailand had a significant impact on affective destination image.

Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to study the relationship between two variables.

Table 6 Correlation between various dimensions

Pearson Correlation – Standard Format							
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Thai Drama Viewing Behavior	Cognitive Image of Destination	Affective Image of Destination	Overall Image of Destination	Travel Intention
Thai Drama Viewing Behavior	4.431	0.939	1				

Table 6 Correlation between various dimensions (Next)

Pearson Correlation – Standard Format							
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Thai Drama Viewing Behavior	Cognitive Image of Destination	Affective Image of Destination	Overall Image of Destination	Travel Intention
Cognitive Image of Destination	4.288	0.941	0.971**	1			
Affective Image of Destination	4.296	0.928	0.976**	0.994**	1		
Overall Image of Destination	4.195	0.902	0.972**	0.986**	0.992**	1	
Travel Intention	3.988	0.870	0.959**	0.963**	0.971**	0.987**	1

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

This suggests low data dispersion and that the scores are relatively concentrated. There is a strong positive correlation between Thai drama viewing behavior and the audience’s cognitive image, affective image, overall image of Thailand, as well as their travel intention.

Regression analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical method used to study the relationship between variables. In this study, the independent variable is defined as Thai television drama viewing behavior (DTVVB). The dependent variable of the study is travel intention (DTI) toward Thailand.

Table 7 Regression analysis results

	Linear Regression Analysis Results (n=386)						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Diagnostics	
	B	Standard Error	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
Constant	-0.030	0.031	-	-0.974	0.331	-	-
Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior Dimension	0.127	0.031	0.137	4.062	0.000**	21.238	0.047
Destination Cognitive Image Dimension	-0.168	0.062	-0.181	-2.707	0.007**	84.069	0.012

Table 7 Regression analysis results (Next)

Linear Regression Analysis Results (n=386)							
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Diagnostics	
	B	Standard Error	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
Destination Affective Image Dimension	-0.398	0.086	-0.425	-4.627	0.000**	157.653	0.006
Overall Image Dimension	1.403	0.057	1.454	24.748	0.000**	64.586	0.015
R ²				0.980			
Adjusted R ²				0.979			
F				F (4,381)=4579.929,p=0.000			
D-W value				1.809			

Note: Dependent variable = Tourism Intention Dimension

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

The F-test result, $F(4, 381) = 4579.929$, $p < 0.001$, further confirms that the model is statistically significant, implying that the independent variables collectively have a meaningful impact on tourism intention. However, it has a significant negative impact on the travel intention of young Chinese audiences toward Thailand, as sample as destination affective image dimension, specifically, as the viewers' affective evaluation of Thailand as a travel destination increases, their intention to travel there significantly decreases. This unexpected negative relationship may suggest that the emotional experiences or sentiments associated with Thailand are not aligning with the viewers' expectations.

Structural equation model

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical technique that combines causal analysis with multivariate statistical analysis to explore the complex relationships between multiple variables.

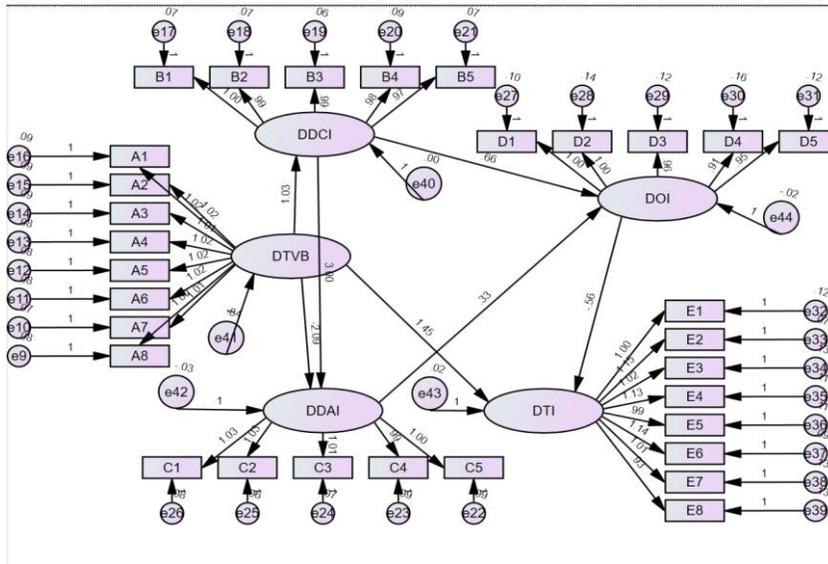


Figure 1 Structural equation model

Table 8 Structural Equation Coefficient Table

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Destination Cognitive Image	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.028	.022	46.253	***
Destination Affective Image	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	-2.093	.685	-3.057	.002
Destination Affective Image	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	3.003	.667	4.501	***
Overall Image	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	.659	.032	20.893	***
Overall Image	<---	Destination Affective Image	.334	.031	10.917	***
Tourism Intention	<---	Overall Image	-.557	.081	-6.872	***
Tourism Intention	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.451	.090	16.195	***
A8	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.000			
A7	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.011	.022	45.873	***
A6	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.024	.023	44.852	***

Table 8 Structural Equation Coefficient Table (Next)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
A5	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.022	.023	45.219	***
A4	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.018	.023	44.671	***
A3	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.013	.023	43.362	***
A2	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.016	.023	43.651	***
A1	<---	Thai TV Drama Viewing Behavior	1.020	.023	43.668	***
B1	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	1.000			
B2	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	.988	.020	49.328	***
B3	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	.994	.019	51.597	***
B4	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	.980	.021	46.100	***
B5	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	.975	.020	49.569	***
C5	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	1.000			
C4	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	.988	.023	42.084	***
C3	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	1.014	.023	44.388	***
C2	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	1.030	.022	45.960	***
C1	<---	Destination Cognitive Image	1.025	.023	44.160	***
D1	<---	Overall Image	1.000			
D2	<---	Overall Image	.997	.027	37.098	***
D3	<---	Overall Image	.961	.025	38.105	***
D4	<---	Overall Image	.914	.027	33.836	***
D5	<---	Overall Image	.952	.025	37.513	***
E1	<---	Tourism Intention	1.000			
E2	<---	Tourism Intention	1.155	.030	38.253	***

Table 8 Structural Equation Coefficient Table (Next)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
E3	<---	Tourism Intention	1.016	.032	31.893	***
E4	<---	Tourism Intention	1.135	.032	34.933	***
E5	<---	Tourism Intention	.992	.030	32.904	***
E6	<---	Tourism Intention	1.136	.031	36.566	***
E7	<---	Tourism Intention	1.006	.032	31.706	***
E8	<---	Tourism Intention	.933	.030	30.861	***

The results showed that all observed variables had significant factor loadings on their latent variables ($p < 0.001$), indicating a good fit of the measurement model.

Alternatively in qualitative approach, the results showed in thematic analysis could summarized through in-depth interviews that this study found significant links between Thai TV drama viewing behavior (TTDVB) and various components of destination image: cognitive (DCI), affective (DAI), and overall image (OI). These, in turn, are closely tied to the development of travel intention (TI).

Results

1. Thai TV drama viewing behavior is positively associated with travel Intention. It is anticipated that Thai drama viewing behavior will exhibit a significant and positive relationship with young Chinese audiences' intention to travel to Thailand.

2. Destination cognitive Image as a mediating variable that encompasses viewers' perceptions of the country's tangible attributes such as safety, infrastructure, natural beauty, culture, and entertainment, is expected to mediate the relationship between media exposure and travel intention.

3. Destination affective image as an emotional mediator that responses or feelings associated with Thailand, is also expected to play a critical mediating role. Viewers may develop positive emotions such as admiration, warmth, and longing through identification with characters and narratives in Thai dramas.

4. Overall image as a synthesizing construct is expected to function as an integrative mediator that synthesizes both cognitive and affective

impressions. As viewers internalize what they see and feel, they form a holistic image of the destination, which serves as the final psychological filter through which travel decisions are made.

Discussion

By combining quantitative findings with theoretical logic, this study constructs a causal chain from media exposure to tourism behavioral intention and offers an in-depth analysis of its key mechanisms (Gao & Zhang, 2021), as detailed in the following aspects:

1. Thai TV drama viewing behavior has a direct and significant positive effect on travel intention. The SEM results indicate that Thai drama viewing behavior has a significant positive path to travel intention, both directly and indirectly through mediating variables, with statistical significance.

2. Destination cognitive image plays a central role as a mediating variable. The study further finds that the destination cognitive image serves as a crucial cognitive bridge between drama viewing behavior and travel intention.

3. Affective image plays an emotional mediating role following cognition. On the foundation of cognitive image, the destination affective image becomes a key emotional channel enhancing travel intention.

4. Rational Evaluation of Overall Image Reduces Travel Intention. While overall destination image typically enhances travel intention, in this case, the opposite effect suggests a rational reevaluation of the destination based on accumulated impressions.

Body of Knowledge

Construction and Validation of the TV Drama–Image–Intention Integrated Model. One of the most significant contributions of this study lies in the successful construction and empirical validation of an integrated structural equation model that systematically links media consumption behavior specifically, the viewing of TV dramas with the development of destination image and the formation of travel intention (Chen et al., 2019).

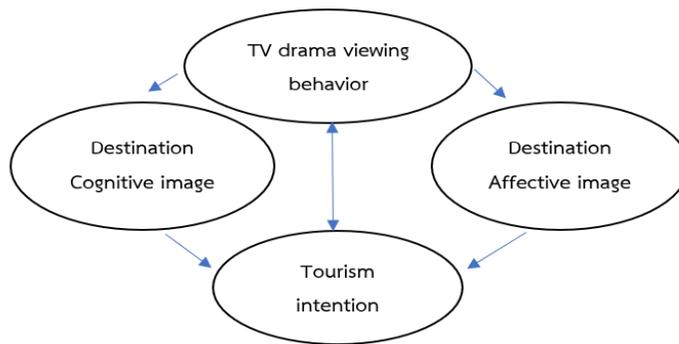


Figure 1 New concept for knowledge

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

1. The Thai government and tourism promotion agencies should place greater emphasis on the potential of Thai dramas as soft tourism advertisements.
2. Chinese new media platforms should leverage their strength in content distribution and social engagement to create diversified communication scenarios for Thai tourism marketing.
3. Thai drama producers should enhance the integration of Thai cultural elements and tourism resources into scripts and visual presentation.

Operational Recommendations

1. To maintain momentum beyond the drama's broadcast period, the government could organize drama filming location tours, publish travel guides based on the show, or provide interactive destination maps.
2. To enhance this strategy, new media platforms could integrate data analytics and recommendation algorithms to push personalized tourism-related content based on users' past viewing behavior and search history.
3. Writers and directors are thus encouraged to deliberately select filming locations and cultural symbols in a way that aligns with plot development and artistic expression while subtly conveying tourism information.

Recommendations for Next Research

1. Employ Longitudinal and Cross-Cultural Research Designs. Future studies could track participants at multiple points before, during, and after

their media consumption to uncover how cognitive and affective images evolve and how these changes influence travel decisions.

2. Deepen the Qualitative Exploration of Audience Psychology. future research could place greater emphasis on the qualitative dimension to explore the deeper emotional, symbolic, and psychological meanings behind drama-induced travel motivation.

3. Expand the Theoretical Model with Additional Variables and Technological Dimensions. Future research could develop more comprehensive models that include other psychological or behavioral factors.

4. Explore Post-Travel Feedback and Policy Implications. future research should also consider the policy and industry implications of media-tourism integration. How can public policy support the alignment of drama production with national tourism objectives? How can the private sector (e.g., hospitality, transport, and cultural attractions) collaborate with content creators to create integrated drama travel packages.

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